

Message Text

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42

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 SP-03 AID-20 EB-11 NSC-07 RSC-01

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XMB-07 OPIC-12 IGA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00

PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01 DRC-01 /176 W

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R 091323Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6449

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USDOC WASHDC

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, CON, DM

SUBJ: SUMMARY OF NATIONAL ECONOMIC SEMINAR

1. EARLY FRAGMENTED REPORTS OF OUTCOME DAHOMEAN NATIONAL ECONOMIC SEMINAR INDICATE RECOMMENDATIONS LIKELY BE COMPRO-MISE BETWEEN DESIRE ENCOURAGE PRIVATE INVESTMENT AND WISH INCREASE GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF ALL APSECTS COUNTRY'S LIFE. FACT THAT THESE GOALS MAY PROVE INCOMPATIBLE IN PRACTICE NOT LIKELY DETER SEMINARIANS SEEKING TRADITIONAL AFRICAN UNANIMITY.

2. ON ONE HAND, SEVERAL SOURCES, INCLUDING FRENCH AMB REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE ESTABLISHMENT NEW CONOMIC MINISTRY. THIS WOULD HAVE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENCOURAGEING AND COORDINATING FOREIGN ASSISTANCE, INVESTMENT, AND TOURISM. MINISTER MAY BE CIVILIAN. PRIMARY AIM THIS MINISTRY WOULD BE REASSURE AND ECNOURAGE PRIVATE INVESTORS.

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3. ON OTHER HAND, INFORMATION MIN MAY BE GIVEN ADDITIONAL FUNCTION OF PROMOTING IDEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION THROUGH CONTROL OF MASS ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDING YOUTH GROUPS.

4. SOME FORM OF COLLECTIVIZATION OF AGRICULTURE ALSO IS ANTICIPATED UNDER CONTROL OF PREFETS IN EACH DEPT (WHO IN TURN REPORT TO MIN INTERIOR AIKPE). PLAN IS TO ABSORB VARIOUS GOVERNMENTS AGENCIES NOW CONTROLLING ONE OR TWO PROVINCES (E.G. PALM PLANTATION GROUP IN SOUTH, COTTON GROUP IN NORTH) INTO GLOBAL ORGANIZATION HAVING COORDINATING RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENTIRE COUNTRY. HOWEVER, WITHIN THIS UMBRELLA FRAMEWORK, PROVINCIAL UNITS WOULD BE AUTONOMOUS AND UNDER PREFETS' DIRECTION. FINAL GOAL WOULD BE TO INCLUDE ALL PEASANT FARMERS IN THIS COLLECTIVE ORGANIZATION. PREFETS WOULD LIKELY SET PRIORITIES FOR VARIOUS AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES WITHIN PROVINCE AS WELL AS HANDLE THEIR SALE TO SODAIC, NATIONAL COMMERCIAL AGENCY FOR FARM PRODUCTS. MAJOR BENEFIT OF THIS SCHEME IS THAT LOCALITIES WILL BE ABLE KEEP PART OF SALES REVENUES, GIVING THEM GREATER POWER OVER THEIR OWN AFFAIRS. THIS SEEMS TO MESH PERFECTLY WITH AIKPE'S PROGRAM TO ENHANCE POWER OF PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES WHOSE ADMINISTRATORS ANSWER TO HIM ALONE. (PLANS SEEM TO BE PROCEEDING FOR THIS SHIFT, AS FORMER DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH HAS BEEN WORKING IN THE INTERIOR MINISTRY FOR PAST THREE MONTHS, OFFERING TECHNICAL ADVICE TO PREFETS.)

5. SEMINAR ALSO REPEATED NEED FOR MRGD TO START DEVELOPING COUNTRY'S NATURAL RESOURCES. NEW PROFIT TAX PASSED LAST FEB WAS SEEN AS SHORT-TERM SOLUTION TO GOVERNMENT'S PERENNIAL FISCAL DILEMMA, BUT LONG-RUN HOPES LIE ONLY IN REVENUES FROM LARGE-SCALE MINERAL EXPLOITATION PROJECTS. THEREFORE, MRGD WAS TOLD TO PRESS AHEAD IN SEARCH FOR INTERESTED PARTNERS FOR SUCH UNDERTAKINGS.

6. COMMENT: FOR ALL THE RUMORS OF HEATED DEBATE DURING THE SEMINAR, FINAL RESULTS SEEM FAIRLY CLEAR-HEADED. NATIONALIZATIONS WERE APPARENTLY DISCARDED BY MODERATES AS TOO EXTREME. OVERALL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM REMAINS LARGELY BASED ON INCREASING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND EXPLOITING NATURAL RESOURCES. IN SHORT, SIX-WEEK LONG SEMINAR DID NOT PRODUCE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ANY GREAT SURPRISES.
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